"England, Canada and The Great War."

By

Lieutenant-Colonel L. G. Desjardins, ex-Member of the House of Commons, Ottawa, and of the Legislative Assembly, Quebec.

October 1, 1918.

Press Reviews of this Most Important and Patriotic Work.

A new book has seldom been welcomed by the Press and the public at large, in terms so laudatory as the above mentioned volume has been. It has received the unanimous high appreciation it certainly deserves. Both the English and the French Press have written most favourably of the book published by Colonel Desjardins, strongly approving the views therein enunciated and supported by sound logic, irrefutable arguments, incontrovertible historic facts, a wide and authoritative knowledge of the true principles of International and Constitutional Laws, and a very large experience of public and political affairs.

All those who have read Colonel Desjardins' very important book agree in eulogizing his felicitous writing of the English language. He, a French Canadian, wrote his volume of 440 pages

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from the first to the last work, absolutely alone, thus proving how wide and sound a knowledge he has mastered through his life time of studying, reading and speaking the English tongue. It is a very good example which should be followed both by English speaking and French speaking Canadians whose educational training affords them the facility of learning the one idiom of their country which is not their mother tongue.

The Editorials and Reviews of some of the Newspapers respecting Colonel Desjardins' book follow and will be read with pleasure and found interesting:—

On Saturday, October 19, 1918, the "*Quebec Chronicle*" published the following Editorial under the title:—

"A Patriotic Production."

"Just about a year ago when feeling in this Province was such as to give other parts of Canada little reason for expecting such a thing, there appeared a book written in the French language by a French Canadian, Lieut.-Col. L. G. Desjardins, which not only warmly defended the course taken by Great Britain in the war and the support which had been volunteered by the Federal Government at Ottawa but which denounced with equal warmth what it considered the erroneously mischievous doctrines of the Nationalist Party of Quebec and its leader Henri Bourassa.

"While, if one may judge by subsequent events, Lieut.-Col. Desjardins was little better than a voice crying in the wilderness, at the same time it would be a dangerous mistake to under-estimate the eventual influence exerted upon his compatriots by such a courageous and logically argued production. To-day at any rate the author has supplemented his previous effort by a book which, although not his native tongue, he has written in English: a feat the more noteworthy since this is no mere translation of the French edition but an entirely new and distinct creation.

"His motives Col. Desjardins thus explains in the preface: 'Having first addressed myself to my French Canadian compatriots to persuade them how much detrimental to their best future the Nationalist campaign was sure to be, I am to-day laying the case before my English speaking countrymen, at the urgent request of many of them, in order to fully acquaint them with the refutation I have made, to the best of my ability, of Mr. Bourassa's erroneous theories and wild charges against England and all those who patriotically support our mother country in the great struggle she has had to wage after doing all she possibly could do to maintain the peace of the world.

" 'I ardently desire that the reading of the following pages will contribute to the restoration of harmony and good-will, for a while endangered by the Nationalist campaign, in our wide Dominion, to whose happiness, prosperity and grandeur we, of both English and French origins, must devote our best energies and all the resources of our unwavering patriotism.'

"The book consists of over four hundred pages and thirty nine chapters while a glance at the table of contents is sufficient evidence of its broad outlook and comprehensive character. If it were only for the enterprise with which a man, in the evening of his days, for the author is no impulsive youth, has thus attempted to point the path of duty and reconcile the two great parent nationalities of the Dominion this work is well entitled to the most generous support from the English-speaking public which we are sure it will receive.

"As a sample of the whole tenor of the work let us conclude with a significant quotation from the conclusion in which the author declares: 'We Canadians, together with our brethren from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa will have done our glorious share to win the war. We shall have to perform with equal devotion the new duty of sharing the British Empire's task in gradually elevating the nations to an enlightened practice of Political Liberty.

"'Evidently to do so with the success this noble cause will deserve, we must first strive to utilize our admirable free institutions to the best advantages for ourselves, for our own future, and for the grand destinies of our Empire.....'

"'More than ever the supreme difficulties of governing numerous racial groups, issued from ancient stocks so long divided by endless feuds—the result of the many sudden changes of territorial limits to be wrought by the restoration of peace—will be very hard to settle satisfactorily. The task will require the constant effort of statesmanship of a high order.

" 'Many of those who will hereafter be trained to self-government will look to us for their guidance. We must give them the inspiring example of fair play, of justice for all, of unity of purpose and aspirations in the diversity of ethnical offsprings.

" 'Need I say that the most urgent duty of all fair minded Canadians is, and will ever be, to heartily join together, to bless our dear country with concord, good feeling, harmony and kindly dispositions to grant an overflowing measure of justice to all our countrymen of all origins and creeds.' "

On the fifth of October, the "*Quebec Chronicle*" had first reviewed Colonel Desjardins' book as follows:—

A Most Patriotic Book.

"Last year in the thick of the Nationalist campaign carried on under the leadership of Mr. Bourassa, a very strong defence of the course followed by England from the very first day of the diplomatic crisis which led to the war, and long before, was made by one of our leading citizens, Lieut.-Colonel L. G. Desjardins. The comprehensive book which he published, entitled: "L'Angleterre, le Canada et La Grande Guerre," met with the most cordial reception from the reading public, very much pleased with the loyal sentiments it expressed, the strength of the arguments in refuting the theories of Bourassist Nationalism, the sound-

ness of the principles of international, as well as constitutional law, it expounded, and the truth of all the historical facts it affirmed and commented upon.

"The evident proof that Colonel Desjardins' work was considered very worth reading, is that the author had to issue a second and much larger edition, the first having been rapidly exhausted within a few weeks.

"Our readers will remember how favourably Colonel Desjardins' very important book was reviewed in our columns, and that we expressed the wish that an English edition should be published.

"Strongly advised by many, Col. Desjardins has answered the call made to his patriotism and has just issued an English edition of his book.

"It is most interesting reading, as the book denounces with force the dangerous purport of National Doctrines, and defends England and the British Empire against the extravagant aspersions of the Nationalist leader. It glorifies the part Canada is playing in the wonderful drama which, after so many vicissitudes, is at last drawing to the only close worthy of the magnificent effort of the Allied nations to save civilization from German autocratic domination.

"As this book is entirely his own composition, Colonel Desjardins, in the Introduction prays for the kind indulgence of his readers respecting the inadequacy of his command of the English language. It would, however, tend a great deal to the public weal if more of our writers could use French and English as well as the distiguished author of "England, Canada and the Great War."

"The author was well advised in not merely translating his French work, but in writing an original English book on the same subject, covering the same questions with the additional ones developed by the trend of events. He wanted his work to be up-to-date, and has indeed succeeded in making it so. As an evidence of it, we particularly recommend the chapters entitled: "The Last Peace Proposals," and "The Necessary Peace conditions."

"The concluding paragraphs of the Preface to Colonel Desjardins' book read thus:

" 'Deeply moved by the dangers of a most mischievious campaign, I considered it my bounden duty to do my utmost to prove how utterly wrong were the views which those pursuing it with passionate energy wanted to prevail, and to show the sad consequences it was sure to produce.

" 'Having first addressed myself to my French-Canadian compatriots to persuade them how much detrimental to their best future the Nationalist campaign was sure to be, I am to-day laying the case before my English-speaking countrymen, at the urgent request of many of them, in order to fully acquaint them with the refutation I have made to the best of my ability, of Mr. Bourassa's erroneous theories and wild charges against England, and those who patriotically support our Mother Country in the great struggle she has had to wage after doing all she possibly could to maintain the peace of the world.

" 'I ardently desire that the reading of the following pages, will contribute to the restoration of harmony and good will, for a while endangered by

the Nationalist campaign, in our wide Dominion, to whose happiness, prosperity and grandeur we, of both English and French origins, must devote our best energies and all the resources of our unwavering patriotism."

"In the Introduction to his English work, Colonel Desjardins reproduces the following paragraphs from the letter prefacing his French book, and dedicating it to his French-Canadian compatriots:

" 'This book, written for the express purpose of assisting you to form for yourselves a sound opinion about the terrible events so rapidly developing, was inspired by my loyalty to the Empire whose faithful subject I glory to be, by my devotion to Canada and to my countrymen, by the affectionate recollections of France I will cherish to my last day.

" 'During the last fifty years, either as a private or as an officer of the Canadian Militia—my service as such having lasted more than forty years—as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec, and as a member of the House of Commons of Canada, I have often taken the oath of allegiance to the Sovereign of Great Britain. From my early youth, I had learned that under the ægis of the British Crown, the citizen of the Empire could be true to his oath, and enjoy the precious liberty of expressing his opinion. But I had also soon realized that during the lifetime of a Sovereign State, days of peril might occur. I had easily come to the conclusion that in those trying moments the loyal duty could be very happily

conciliated with the most sincere love of political liberty.

"'In defending with the most sincere conviction the sacred cause of the Allies, I am doing my duty as a free subject of the British Empire, as a citizen of Canada and of the Province of Quebec, as a son of France, as a devoted servant of Justice and Right. I am true to my oath.'"

On October 12, Dr. Harper, from Quebec, published in the *"Quebec Chronicle"* the following highly favourable appreciation of Col. Desjardins' volume. It reads thus:—

"Were we Canadians possessed of a gift of over-praising our literary men, outside of sectional impulses, an instant welcome would certainly be extended to Colonel Desjardins' latest book, which bears the title of "England, Canada and the Great War." The adage that a "prophet is not without honor, save in his own country" can hardly be applied to this well-known ex-member of parliament, provincial and federal, who has just followed up his first volume, written in French, by this second volume of his, written in English. The Bonne Entente movement, but for its interruption by the war was successful in bringing the two distinctive races of Canada face to face in a directly friendly way during its celebrations; and Col. Desjardins is doing much the same thing, in spite of the war, and with a warm patriotic appreciation of what their national duty towards one another should be, if our Canadianism is, for the present and in the future, to be characterized by the staying powers of

a beneficial national unity. This article is not intended to be extended into any analytical review of the veteran publicist's latest work. That has been done judiciously by others. What I would especially emphasize is that there can be no dubiety about the ethical stand taken by the astute author, while pleading with his French-Canadian compatriots in a first volume and with his English-speaking compatriots in the later volume the one written in French and the other in English, to the effect that there should be a permanent understanding and national "camraderie" between them and all the other races that have made Canada their homeland, and labor in the vineyard of the Dominion for themselves and their country at large.

"Indeed, Col. Desjardins' natice familiarity with his mother tongue and his attractive skill in utilizing the idioms of a pure and undefiled English, stand as an exponent of what may happen when once these two languages form a parallel gift in all of us Canadians, as a means of promoting a solidarity in our fellow-citizenship, as a one and the same, in our advocacies of what is for the advancement of our common country. The volume he has just published is one which no wholesome Canadian need refrain from reading. It forms a bit of Canadian literature which every Canadian scholar may gladly give a place to on his library shelves, and the workmen of the printing house from which it has been issued are to be congratulated on giving it such a suitable form. In a word, Colonel Desjardins' new book carries with it its

own recommendation as a volume suitable for any library, and altogether embodies a plea, concerning which there can be no difference of opinion, namely, the plea of every true Canadian who would have "A Canada one and undivided, grouped within an Empire fully equipped to protect its National Unity, when once its various provinces make up their minds to stand shoulder to shoulder in the maturing and upholding of the same, however we may differ in our opinions in our discussions of civic or religious affairs."

The "*Daily Telegraph*" of the 4th of October reviewed Colonel Desjardins' book in the following eulogious terms, calling the attention of its readers to it by an editorial note:—

"The attention of our readers is drawn to the article appearing elsewhere in the Telegraph on the new English book of Lt.-Col. Desjardins, entitled, "England, Canada and the Great War." This article gives a clear interpretation of that type of French-Canadian thought which does not consider imperial interests as necessarily antagonistic to Canadianism. Whether one may or may not agree with Colonel Desjardins' somewhat idealistic attitude, the brief which he holds is admittedly forcifully pleaded. Particularly thorough is his excoriation of the blight of Bourassaism."

Nationalist Errors Condemned.

"A very important English book is published by the distinguished Quebecer, Lt.-Colonel L. G. Desjardins, under the title: "England, Canada and the Great War." It has been written for the very laudable purpose of exposing how erroneous, how utterly false, dangerous, mischievous are the theories of Nationalism so tenaciously supported by Mr. Bourassa.

"The readers of the Telegraph no doubt remember the review made last year of Colonel Desjardins' French work entitled: "L'Angleterre, le Canada et la Grande Guerre." The book was, indeed, appreciated by the French reading public. The first edition having been exhausted in a few weeks, a second one, trebled in number, was published by the author, and yet was not equal to the demand. Colonel Desjardins proposes to issue a third edition.

"Also reviewed most favourably by the leading English newspapers of Montreal and Toronto, concluding by strongly advising the publication of an English edition, Colonel Desjardins' book was justly considered as one of the most important issued on the overshadowing subject of the war and the Canadian participation in its operations.

"Desirous of meeting the expressed wishes of the English-speaking public, Colonel Desjardins undertook to publish the fine book he issues today.

"The whole volume has been written in English by Colonel Desjardins himself. Wishing his book to be entirely up to date, taking in the most important developments of the war situation since

the issue of his French book, he very wisely decided not to make a verbatim translation of his French work, but to write out an English one, irrespective of the French wording, covering the same subjects, discussing the same questions, bringing out with equal force the same points, drawing the same conclusions.

"After perusing Colonel Desjardins' most valuable and interesting book, the Telegraph has much pleasure in congratulating him on his knowledge and command of the English language. Readers will be able to judge for themselves from the following quotations from the introduction to Colonel Desjardins' book. Dealing with the vexed conscription question, Colonel Desjardins wrote as follows:

"Deeply conscious of the sacred duty of all truly loyal British subjects through all the present prolonged world crisis for the life or death of human liberty, I had to consider conscription from the double standpoint of a free citizen of Canada and of my military experience acquired in the course of a service of over forty years.

"Most strongly and convincingly opposed to the militarism of the atrocious German type—the curse of Humanity—I have always believed—and do still believe—imbued I hope with the true sense and principle of democratic institutions, that the greatest boon that could be granted the world would be that the admirable Christian law of peace and goodwill amongst men would prevail for all times, and save the nations from the cruel obligation of keeping themselves constantly fully armed at great cost of the best years of manhood

and treasure. But unfortunately it has not yet been the good luck of man to reach the goal of this most noble ambition. Instead of a steady advance in the right direction, he has, for the last fifty years, experienced a most dangerous set back by the predominating influence of German militarism, developed and mastered by the most autocratic power to the point of threatening the liberties of the whole world.

"Need I say that, as a purely philosophical question of principle, I most sincerely deplore that the political state of the world has been, and is such that national safety cannot be, in too many cases, properly assured without the law of the land calling upon the manhood of a country to make the sacrifice of part of the best years of enthusiastic youth, and requiring from the nation, as a collective body, the expenditure, to an untold amount, for the purpose of defence, of the accumulated savings of hard work and intelligent thrift.

"Fortunately the two continents of America, so abundantly blessed by Providence, had, until the present war, been able to pursue their prosperous and dignified course free from the entanglements of European Militarism.

"Even England, in all the majesty of her imperial power, her flag gloriously waving over so many millions of free men, protected as she was by the waves which she ruled with grandeur and grace, had succeeded in avoiding the curse of continental conscriptionism.

"Between permanent conscription, despotically imposed upon a nation under autocratic rule, and temporary military compulsion freely accept-

ed by a noble people for the very purpose of saving humanity from military absolutism, there is, every one must admit, a wide difference. I have been, I am, and will be, to my last day, the uncompromising opponent of autocratic conscription, which I consider as a permanent crime against Christian civilization, and the ready instrument of barbarous domination. To temporary compulsion I agree, as a matter of patriotic and national duty, if the circumstances of the case are such that without its timely use, my country which has the first and undoubted right to my most patriotic devotion, at the cost of all I may own and even of my life, for her defence, would fall the prey to despotism which would bleed her to death to sway the world.

"Such is the ordeal through which Canada, the British Empire, in fact much the greater part of the universe are passing with torrents of blood shed to rescue Mankind from the domination of German militarism.

"If Germany could have her course free; if she could reach the goal of her criminal ambition, nearly the whole world would be, for many lor years, in the throes of the most abominab conscriptionism.

"If after the enthusiasm of voluntary military service has exhausted itself from the very successful result of its patriotic effort, is it not a duty for all loyal citizens to accept temporary compulsion to save their country from the horrors of defeat at the hands of the most cruel enemy which has ever shamed the light of the sun, since it shines over the human race blessed with Christian principles and moral teachings?

"To the present generation of young men, strong, healthy, brave, let us say: be worthy of the times you live in, be equal to the great task imposed upon you, accept with unflinching patriotism the sacrifices you are called upon to make, never forgetting that temporary compulsion for you means freedom from permanent conscription for your children and children's children in years to come.

"It is from the very height of such lofty considerations that I have made up my mind about this much vexed question which will, we must all earnestly hope, be more and more well understood and eventually settled to the everlasting good of the country once for all delivered from the exasperating menace of German despotism."

"It may be truly said that the brief "for" was never so clearly and so strongly explained, with such a dignified language and considered from such a commanding standpoint.

"The "loyalty" question is very often sadly misconstrued. Let us now read how Colonel Desjardins explains it. In his letter dedicating his French book to his French-Canadian compatriots, he wrote as follows:

"This book, written for the express purpose of assisting you to form for yourselves a sound opinion about the terrible events so rapidly developing, was inspired by my loyalty to the Empire, whose faithful subject I glory to be, by my devotion to Canada, and to my countrymen, by the affectionate recollection of France I will cherish to my last day.

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ice as such having lasted nearly forty years—as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec, and as a member of the House of Commons of Canada, I have often taken the oath allegiance to the Sovereign of Great Britain. From my earliest youth, I had learned that under the ægis of the British Crown, the citizen of the Empire could be true to his oath, and enjoy the precious liberty of expressing his opinion. But I had also soon realized that during the lifetime of a Sovereign State, days of peril might occur. I had easily come to the conclusion that in those trying moments the loyal duty could be very happily conciliated with the most sincere love of political liberty.

"In defending with the most sincere conviction the sacred cause of the Allies, I am doing my duty as a free subject of the British Empire, as a citizen of Canada and of the Province of Quebec, as a devoted servant of Justice and Right. I am true to my oath."

"Such noble words indeed make refreshing reading. No wonder that with such a high standard of patriotic loyalty, Colonel Desjardins was shocked at the violent utterances of the Nationalist school, and valiantly took the cudgels against disguised enemies of England and shameless German sympathizers, wilfully abusing among us their liberties to poison the public mind against the cause so dear to all true Canadian loyal hearts.

"Colonel Desjardins' book should be widely circulated all over the Dominion, Great Britain and the United States. We are sure it will be read

with delight. It comes at the most opportune moment, as the foreteller of the grand victory at last looming large and brilliant on the heroic allied nations' horizon."

On the 19th of October, the "*Globe*", of Toronto, published the following Review of Colonel Desjardins' volume, from the pen of John Squair, Esq., one of the most distinguished Professors of the great and renowned University of Toronto:—

"A new book in English entitled, "England, Canada and the Great War", by Lieut.-Col. L. G. Desjardins of Quebec, has just appeared. It will appeal to all loyal Canadians as a vigorous exposition of the part the British Empire has played in the war from the moment that the English Government espoused the cause of Belgium and France to the present (up to mid-September) when a victory for the Entente Allies seems assured.

"The chief motive of the work was the indignation of Col. Desjardins at the constant effort of Mr. Henri Bourassa to persuade his French-Canadian compatriots that their participation in the war was wrong. Day in and day out from August, 1914, until the censor caused some interruption to his activity, Mr. Bourassa labored to mislead Canadians by reading our history wrongly, by slandering England and by false political reasoning. There are many indications now in the press and elsewhere that his Nationalist propaganda has not met with the success he had hoped for, and a share of this failure is due to the sturdy defense

of England, her institutions, and her policy which has been offered by earlier works in French from the pen of Col. Desjardins.

"The preposterous misreading of constitutional history by Mr. Bourassa, by which he attempted to prove that solemn engagements between England and Canada made Canadian participation in England's war revolutionary, is thoroughly exposed. Another favorite theory of Mr. Bourassa, namely, that England is just as bad as Germany, also receives attention from Col. Desjardins. By a penetrating and sympathetic analysis of the history of England's home, colonial and foreign policy he shows that England has constanty striven to keep peace in the world and to extend the blessings of industry and commerce. She has not had a large standing army like Germany. The only means of defense which was made ample and strong was the navy, and this because she was an island. The charge of Mr. Bourassa that English militarism is of all the instruments of brutal domination the most execrable by reason of her strong navy, is shown to be mere empty, ill-natured talk.

The lucubrations of Mr. Bourassa regarding the origin of the war are also criticized. It is absurd to speak of England's jealousy of Germany's advances in trade and commerce as a cause of the war. There is no proof that England wished to dominate the world economically. Whether right or wrong, the majority of Englishmen had refused to close the door on German trade. The way of the sea was as open to Germany and to all others as to Englishmen.

"Nor does Col. Desjardins overlook Mr. Bourassa's constant use of insulting language when speaking of England. Englishmen are declared by him to be "ignorant, pretentious, arrogant, short-sighted, domineering, and rotten with mercantilism." However, in this respect no nation fares much better, unless it be Germany, at the hands of Mr. Bourassa. The Yankees have vices also and Canadians are worse than Englishmen, for they have "abdicated the proud character and the primordial rights of the British people." Our brave soldiers, too, are soundly berated by Mr. Bourassa. He speaks of them as "a depraved and undisciplined soldiery, an armed scoundrelism, without faith or law." And this is from him whose object was given out to be to raise the tone of journalism!

"But not all the book is occupied with the refutation of Mr. Bourassa's errors. There is in it also a large amount of information regarding home and foreign questions, and much interesting reflection on problems of our own politics or those of our neighbors. The chapters on Imperialism are of this sort. For Col. Desjardins not all Imperialism is bad. There may be good kinds of it. We find such in the English and American varities, where great advantage has resulted from the extension and consolidation of power. Our author regards our own Canadian confederation of 1867 as the "first real attempt" at Imperialism in our country. And he, unlike some Nationalists of Quebec, considers that it has had "much laudable success."

"In regard to the great question of militarism, Col. Desjardins is "most strongly and convincingly opposed to the atrocious German type—the curse of humanity. . . The greatest boon that could be granted the world would be that the admirable Christian law of peace and good-will amongst men should prevail for all time." And he hopes that after victory for the allies will come a peace which shall guarantee a tranquility not based on armed force.

"To close, the writer desires to recommend to all Canadians this eloquent and dignified expression of loyalty and good-will to Canada and the British Empire. It is a book free from rancor and partisanship. Whether the reader be Catholic or Protestant, Conservative or Liberal, he will find nothing in it to offend and a great deal to instruct and edify."

JOHN SQUAIR.

University of Toronto.

Many other Editorials and Reviews could be added to the foregoing from both the English and the French Press, all written in the same highly appreciative manner of Colonel Desjardins' most important and patriotic book.